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Committee on Conferences
Substantive session of 2003

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Andrius **Namavičius** (Lithuania)

I. Organizational matters

A. Membership

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 43/222 B, decided to retain the Committee on Conferences as a permanent subsidiary organ. Pursuant to the provisions of that resolution, in 2003 the Committee was composed of the following Member States: Argentina, Austria, Benin, Bolivia, Congo, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Nepal, Peru, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, United States of America and Zambia.

B. Officers

2. At its organizational session for 2003, the Committee elected the following officers to serve in 2003:

Chairman:
Mohammad **Tal** (Jordan)

Vice-Chairpersons:
Guillermo E. **Kendall** (Argentina)
Mikael **Raivio** (Finland)
Rafla **M'Rabet** (Tunisia)

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3. At the same meeting, the Committee agreed in principle that the Chairman would undertake informal consultations with a view to determining the composition of the Committee's Bureau in 2004.

C. Organization of work

4. At its organizational session (449th meeting), the Committee agreed to follow the guidelines adopted in 1994 and 1995 with regard to consideration of intersessional departures from the approved calendar of conferences and to meet, as required, to review proposals affecting the schedule of conferences and meetings during sessions of the General Assembly.

5. The Committee convened its substantive session on 8, 10 and 12 September 2003 (451st through 456th meetings).

6. The Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management addressed the Committee at the opening of its organizational and substantive sessions. At the substantive session, he introduced the report of the Secretary-General on reform of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management (A/58/213) and the proposed programme budget of the Department for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/58/6 (Sect. 2)).

7. The report of the Secretary-General on the pattern of conferences (A/58/194) was introduced by a representative of the Secretariat. The consolidation into one report of all matters of a technical nature, an innovation in 2002, was continued in 2003.

D. Programme of work

8. At its organizational session for 2002, held on 22 March 2002, the Committee had requested the Secretariat to submit a draft agenda for 2003 to the Committee at its organizational session for 2003. At the 449th meeting, on 22 April 2003, the Committee adopted the proposed agenda (A/AC.172/2003/1) and requested the Secretariat to submit a draft agenda for 2004 to the Committee at its organizational session for 2004.

9. In order to provide more relevant advice to the General Assembly, the Committee decided to recommend for adoption by the General Assembly elements of a draft resolution reflecting the substantive discussion that took place in the Committee, thereby facilitating the consideration of the item by the Assembly (see A/AC.172/2003/CRP.2/Add.12).

E. Participation of observers

10. The following States Members of the United Nations were represented as observers: Algeria, Belgium, Canada, China, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Germany, Ireland, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Portugal, Romania, South Africa, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

11. At its 454th meeting, on 10 September 2003, the Committee on Conferences considered the question of participation of observers. The question was given particular attention during the informal drafting meetings of the Committee. Some delegations held the view that the widest possible participation was desirable and that it would be reasonable to allow observers to present drafting proposals during informal consultations. Other delegations held the view that the distinction between

Committee members and observers should be maintained and that a drafting group confined to members would be more efficient and appropriate.

F. Biennialization of the item entitled "Pattern of conferences" in the agenda of the General Assembly

12. At its 454th meeting, on 10 September 2003, the Committee considered the possibility of biennializing the item entitled "Pattern of conferences" in the agenda of the General Assembly.

13. Delegations expressed interest in the idea but thought that the time was not ripe, since the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management was in the midst of an important reform that warranted annual monitoring by the General Assembly. Moreover, given the importance and wide scope of the activities in this area, an annual review of the item was considered necessary. It was concluded that the modalities and implications of the biennialization of the agenda item would require further thought.

Conclusions

14. **The Committee concluded that its current procedures should be retained, on the understanding that observers could present their proposals in formal meetings. The Committee welcomed the active participation of observers and also encouraged interested delegations to consider seeking membership in the Committee.**